



GAHANNA PARKS & RECREATION FOUNDATION

200 S. HAMILTON RD. GAHANNA, OHIO 43230 - 614.342.4250 - WWW.GAHANNA.GOV

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 24, 2011

Community Organizations, Led By Heartland Bank, Answer the Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation's Call to Save The Freedom Festival

The Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation Freedom Festival Presented By Heartland Bank Honoring our Troops and Benefiting the USO brings the community together this Fourth of July.

GAHANNA, Ohio – The Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation announced today that Heartland Bank, headquartered in Gahanna, has offered to sponsor the Gahanna Freedom Festival. Their donation, combined with the generous donations of individuals and other organizations, means enough money has been raised to fund the **FREEDOM FESTIVAL** and fireworks show for July 4th, 2011.

“Heartland has been fortunate to have navigated the financial waters successfully and simply want to give back to the residents of Gahanna. The Parks Foundation and community were in jeopardy of losing one of the best community events of the year and we were not going to let that happen. This is what community banks do. Best of all, we also get to show our appreciation for our active Military by supporting the USO,” stated G. Scott McComb, Heartland Bank President and CEO.

In 2011, City of Gahanna funding for the 2011 Fourth of July Freedom Festival had been eliminated and the Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation took on the challenge of Saving the Freedom Festival through individual and corporate donations. Their grassroots efforts of outreach and soliciting online donations through their Facebook Page (www.Facebook.com/SaveTheFreedomFestival) yielded enough money to fund the fireworks. Recently, however, local organizations and businesses, such as Gahanna's own Heartland Bank, have pledged their support for a full day of events and a fireworks display the community will certainly enjoy.

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FREEDOM FESTIVAL 2-2-2

“Our city did not want to lose this wonderful community event”, said Lee Tucker, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Foundation. “It’s too important an event; its part of our identity as a city and a country and it’s become a tradition. The community really stepped up through small and large donations. Every dollar made a difference.”

The goal of the *SAVE THE FREEDOM FESTIVAL* campaign was to raise \$40,000 based on actual costs from past events. The fireworks alone are 50% of that budget.

The Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation raised money through individual donations as well as larger, partner donations. Some of the largest donors include ‘**Presenting Eagle Sponsor**’ Heartland Bank, an anonymous donor, Stripes Partners Superior Beverage Group and the Gahanna Rotary Club, ‘**Patriot Sponsors**’ Kemba Financial Credit Union, Eckl Parking and Sunrise Masonic Lodge #783.

“This is another example of what makes Gahanna such a special community,” said Mayor Becky Stinchcomb. “I am proud of the Foundation’s efforts to bring everyone together and to honor our men and women in uniform. Community, service and tradition is what the Fourth of July is all about”

This year’s event will also feature the USO, who will provide activities and honor those serving in the Armed forces.

The USO of Central & Southern Ohio helps lift the spirits of Ohio's service men and women and their families. A nonprofit, congressionally chartered, private organization, the USO relies on the generosity of individuals, organizations and corporations to support its activities. The USO provides a tangible way for all of us to say thank you, as it has for 70 years. The USO is not part

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FREEDOM FESTIVAL 3-3-3

of the U.S. government, and funds that are generated locally are used locally to help those who sacrifice so much every day.

“What makes this so special is that we are going from no event to having one of the greatest events that Gahanna has ever had in honor of our soldiers and a true American Tradition, the USO,” said Tony Collins, Director of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation. “All of this is thanks to the citizens of Gahanna, the Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation and great community partners like Heartland Bank.”

Residents and visitors are encouraged to visit www.Gahanna.gov for up to date information and a schedule of events for the *The Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation Freedom Festival Presented By Heartland Bank Benefiting the USO*

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NOTE TO MEDIA:

Those wishing to speak to those involved in this event should contact the following:

City of Gahanna	Brian Hoyt, Gahanna Public Information	614-342-4043	brian.hoyt@gahanna.gov
Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation	Lee Tucker, Foundation Chairman	614-580-7779	ltucker@funtrail.com
Heartland Bank	Donna Holycross Vice President	614-337-4600 ext, 151	holycrossd@heartlandbank.com

About the Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation

Parks & Recreation services are essential for our City's quality of life. They benefit our lives each day by encouraging businesses and new residents to settle in Gahanna; they provide lifetime family memories; they improve our health and preserve our natural area. Like other resources, these services are funded by the City. However, the needs of our parks, facilities and recreation programming may exceed our financial resources. The Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation was founded to assist the Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation in supporting these needs. This non-profit 501(C)(3) organization is a group of hard-working volunteer citizens who donate their time and talents to protect, nurture, and grow the opportunities our residents deserve. <http://www.gahanna.gov/departments/parks/foundation.aspx>

EIN: 26-2448422
E-mail: foundation@gahanna.gov

